

**CITY OF LYNNWOOD  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION MINUTES  
November 3, 2016 Meeting**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hurst at 6:30 p.m.

**Roll Call**

<b>Commissioners Present:</b>	<b>Staff Present:</b>
Pam Hurst (Chair)	Chanda Emery, Sr. Planner
Michelle Reitan (Vice Chair)	
Julio Cortes	
Peter Schmidt <sup>1</sup>	
Kathy Coffey	
Sandi Farkas	
Mary Ann Dillon	
	<b>Other:</b>
<b>Commissioners Absent:</b> None	Council Liaison Shirley Sutton

Senior Planner Emery noted that Commissioner Schmidt would be arriving a little late as he was coming from a conference in Fife. She also noted Community Development Director Krauss was out sick.

**Approval of Minutes**

**1. Approval of minutes of the September 1, 2016 Meeting**

*Motion made by Commissioner Dillon, seconded by Commissioner Coffey, to approve the September 1, 2016 Human Services Commission minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously (6-0).*

**Petitions and Communications**

Chris Donovan stated she had put in her application to the Human Services Commission in case an opening comes up. She stated she was attending the meeting because she was just interested in what the Commission was doing.

**Staff and Commission Reports**

1. Commissioner Coffey stated that she attended the Everett Community Streets Initiative Task Force Meeting on October 25 and found it very

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<sup>1</sup> Commissioner Schmidt arrived at some point during Dr. Fenn's presentation under Discussion items.

1 interesting. Mayor Stefanson reviewed the work that has been done so far.  
2 Others talked about the work they are doing in Everett around the  
3 Community Streets Initiative, the engagement of the faith communities,  
4 and police and medical involvement.  
5

- 6 2. Senior Planner Chanda Emery stated that the winter shelters will be  
7 opening once the temperature drops to 34 degrees which is usually the  
8 first week of November. She is only aware of one shelter that will be in  
9 operation in Lynnwood which is the South Snohomish County Emergency  
10 Cold Weather Shelter run by Mark Walden of We All Belong. There will be  
11 two pickup locations – one at City Hall and one at the Trader Joe's bus  
12 stop on Highway 99 and 196<sup>th</sup>. She asked if anyone else is aware of any  
13 other shelters that will be available for families and individuals this year.  
14 Chair Hurst asked that the information be forwarded to commissioners in  
15 an email. She asked how 34 degrees was decided upon. Vice Chair  
16 Reitan replied that it is decided by Mark and Sue Walden. The reason they  
17 do it is they have to have a set temperature to avoid confusion for the  
18 users of the shelter and the volunteers. They try to find a temperature  
19 where shelter is especially needed.  
20

- 21 3. Chair Hurst invited everyone to come help cook breakfast for people who  
22 come to the Trinity Neighbors In Need group on December 31 at 7:30 a.m.  
23 Also, on November 14 at 7 p.m. there will be a Budget Meeting for the City  
24 Council. This would be a great time for the Human Resources  
25 Commission to be seen there. She stated she is inviting a lot of homeless  
26 and disconnected people that night to be present to state their needs or  
27 concerns to the Council.  
28

## 29 Discussion

- 30  
31 1. Guest Speaker, Robin Fenn, PhD, LicSW, Research Manager, Snohomish  
32 County Human Services  
33

34 Dr. Fenn spoke regarding the approach the County has used to put  
35 together the 2015 Snohomish County Needs Assessment and the results  
36 of that Assessment. She explained that Snohomish County is required to  
37 conduct a Low Income Needs Assessment every five years which looks at  
38 the causes and conditions of poverty in Snohomish County. This  
39 Assessment was done with many community partners such as Verdant,  
40 South County/Snohomish County Sheriff's Office, Snohomish County Fire  
41 District 1, and Lynnwood Senior Center. She reviewed the methodology  
42 used in conducting the research including 63 elected officials/agency  
43 directors' surveys, 289 direct service providers' surveys, 222 one-on-one  
44 interviews with those in poverty, and 10 different focus groups.  
45

1 A summary of the results showed that the areas with the largest need for  
2 services in the county were mental health, chemical  
3 dependency/substance use issues, employment, housing, and  
4 homelessness. Issues elected officials were interested in learning more  
5 about were healthcare, mental health, employment, substance use,  
6 homelessness, and housing. Elected officials also said they were most  
7 likely to want to hear more about what services to give to youth and  
8 children, especially youth aged 12 to 18. Direct service providers said the  
9 areas with the largest need for services in the county were behavioral  
10 health, housing, homelessness, and employment. They also said the  
11 services most difficult to access were affordable dental care, housing,  
12 mental health, childcare, and mortgage and rent assistance. Direct service  
13 providers said the biggest barriers to providing services to clients were  
14 adequate funding for programs, availability of funding for training,  
15 collaboration with mental health agencies, and ability of agencies to share  
16 client data between each other to improve client services. The biggest  
17 strengths in providing services to clients included collaboration with crisis  
18 systems, collaboration with Snohomish County Human Services  
19 Department, collaboration with education providers, and ability and  
20 willingness of agencies to collaborate in seeking grants.

21  
22 The 222 face-to-face interviews conducted with people in poverty were  
23 translated into the seven languages that are most predominantly spoken  
24 in Snohomish County other than English including: Amharic, Arabic,  
25 Spanish, French, Nepalese, Russian, and Vietnamese. The actual and  
26 perceived service needs as perceived by all the stakeholder groups were  
27 compared. The 222 people interviewed said their top needs were  
28 affordable dental care, affordable medical care, food, safe and affordable  
29 housing, and mortgage/rent assistance. Access to health, medical, and  
30 dental services was the top thing needed by folks that were interviewed.  
31 Feminine hygiene products were also mentioned as a big need by women.  
32 Over 60% said they had used the emergency department at least once in  
33 the past year. 20% of homeless people said they use the jail as their  
34 primary source for healthcare. About 40% of those in poverty had a  
35 primary care doctor as opposed to 15% of those who were homeless.  
36 Access to care was seen as extremely challenging. Over and over they  
37 heard that the primary barrier to receiving medical and dental care is it is  
38 just too expensive. Even with Medicaid it is too expensive because of the  
39 related childcare, transportation, and other complicating factors. 79% of  
40 those who are currently homeless said that they or someone in their family  
41 needed dental help in the last year and went without it. 53.5% of currently  
42 homeless people said they had gone without prescriptions in the last year  
43 due to the cost.

44  
45 Over a quarter of the people interviewed said that they use the bus almost  
46 every day; however, there were barriers related to accessibility and safety

1 of riding the bus. Transportation was cited as one of the biggest barriers in  
2 getting to seek healthcare. Lack of affordable housing in our community is  
3 a huge issue. With the vacancy rates so low, landlords are getting very  
4 choosy about who they rent to. The top conditions that contributed to  
5 individuals' homelessness were family crisis/break up; drug or alcohol  
6 problem; domestic violence; unable to pay rent/mortgage; and jail. Dr.  
7 Fenn stated that she and Andrea spent three days in jail talking to people  
8 as part of this research. Over half of the people they talked to said that  
9 they have a household income of less than \$25,000 per year. 20% said  
10 they have a household income of less than \$5,000 a year including  
11 benefits. Some of the things people had to give up when faced with  
12 unexpected car repairs included: groceries, medicine, being behind in  
13 mortgage, etc.

14  
15 Over two-thirds of the people interviewed said they had no idea where to  
16 find help with job training in Snohomish County. Almost 45% said that they  
17 have been out of work in the past year, but they are looking for a job. 82%  
18 of the people said they use the internet, mostly at the library. They are  
19 most likely to find out about social service programs through a friend or  
20 word-of-mouth and the internet. About a quarter of people interviewed said  
21 they had heard of 211 and called them once. Only 16.5% of the people  
22 interviewed said they actually used 211 to get services and to find out  
23 information. 23% of the people interviewed had called 211 at least once.  
24 32% of the people interviewed had called 911. About 5% of the people  
25 they talked to said they got their information about social service programs  
26 from the paramedics, firemen, local police, and the sheriff's deputies. One  
27 thing they heard again and again was that first responders were providing  
28 an invaluable service to these people.

29  
30 Dr. Fenn summarized that these interviews were difficult and  
31 heartbreaking. People were very appreciative that anyone would take the  
32 time to talk to them as they feel they are invisible.

#### 33 Questions/Comments:

34  
35  
36 Commissioner Schmidt asked if Dr. Fenn had done this presentation for  
37 the leadership of Snohomish County, and if so, how it was received. Dr.  
38 Fenn replied that she has had conversations with many of the County  
39 Council members one on one and presented this information, but has not  
40 done a formal presentation for the County Council directly. They have  
41 presented it in other public forums where many elected officials have been  
42 there. Every police chief and fire chief has gotten a copy of the focus  
43 group results as have many of the municipalities and elected officials.  
44 Commissioner Schmidt thanked Dr. Fenn for her presentation.  
45

1 Commissioner Schmidt then asked for details about the methodology of  
2 the focus groups. Dr. Fenn replied that they came up with standardized  
3 questions. The audios were transcribed verbatim. From there, she did a  
4 thematic analysis and pulled out key information. The focus groups had  
5 10-12 participants. Those who were homeless or in poverty received \$20  
6 Fred Meyer cards and lunch. Executive directors, elected officials, and  
7 direct service providers did not receive lunch or other incentives. To solicit  
8 participants they just asked people who participated in interviews or  
9 surveys if they would like to attend a focus group. They also put flyers up  
10 saying they were looking for people to participate in focus groups at social  
11 service agencies. Bus fare was provided for some participants. The six  
12 focus groups for those in poverty or homeless were conducted across the  
13 county. Dr. Fenn offered to provide the transcripts from the focus group  
14 conducted in Lynnwood to the Commission. Chair Hurst asked her to send  
15 them to her so that she could distribute them to the commissioners.  
16 Commissioner Dillon thanked Dr. Fenn for her work. Chair Hurst  
17 concurred.

18  
19 Commissioner Coffey commented that Leadership Snohomish County had  
20 a Law and Justice Day today. She stated that the work Dr. Fenn has done  
21 comes up every time as a resource for solutions and how the County is  
22 going to do things.

23  
24  
25 2. Guest Speaker, Jerry Gadek, Veterans Service Officer, Master Sergeant  
26 USAF (Retired), Snohomish County Human Services

27  
28 Mr. Gadek explained he was invited to participate in the task force that  
29 wanted to figure out how to make Lynnwood and the rest of Snohomish  
30 County more veteran-friendly. He explained that the numbers for veterans  
31 is a moving target because there are different sources and many different  
32 definitions of veterans. From 2012 to 2015 they have seen a 62% increase  
33 in requests for services through their office. This is partially due to the fact  
34 that they have increased their outreach efforts and partnered with a lot  
35 more agencies. It is also due to the increased need. He noted that  
36 veterans are the last part of the population that typically will even ask for  
37 services so when that it happening it is a serious matter. In South  
38 Snohomish County, 7% of the population in Brier, Lynnwood and  
39 Mountlake Terrace is veterans. The largest concentration of veterans is in  
40 Edmonds at 9% of the population. Nationally, veterans comprise about  
41 10.5% of the population. He discussed difficulties in collecting accurate  
42 data and the wide variation in numbers due to differences in definitions of  
43 veterans. Everett and Marysville have the largest concentrations of  
44 reported veterans in the area.  
45

1 Verdant provides free office space every Tuesday of the month and the  
2 first Wednesday of the month to him and others that want to serve  
3 veterans. It has been very busy. They have had three homeless housing  
4 placements so far.

5  
6 He reviewed a story regarding Bart Smith (whose name was changed for  
7 privacy purposes) and how he values the services that are available to  
8 veterans in the community. Mr. Smith was a foot soldier in Vietnam for 14  
9 months. He did not enjoy his time there, but he did what his country asked  
10 him to do and then he came home. He has lived in South Snohomish  
11 County most of his life since he left Vietnam and loves it, especially  
12 Lynnwood. He worked as a cook in a senior living facility in Lynnwood for  
13 a number of years which was eventually sold and closed, and he lost his  
14 job. He was not able to find a job, became homeless, and started to have  
15 a lot of medical problems. He lived in his vehicle and hung out at the  
16 library a lot of the time. He was eventually referred to the services at  
17 Verdant at a time when he was near death and wouldn't allow himself to  
18 get too far away from Swedish Hospital where he had been revived  
19 several times. After getting in touch with the services at Verdant things  
20 changed for Mr. Smith. Mr. Gadek explained that within 90 days they  
21 found subsidized housing for Mr. Smith through the Department of  
22 Veteran Affairs. They also got him a VA pension to supplement his social  
23 security. His health improved dramatically, and he is very happy. Seven  
24 agencies including the Department of Veteran Affairs, Catholic Community  
25 Services, Snohomish County Veterans, EMT program, Community Health  
26 Centers of Snohomish County, and Verdant came together over the period  
27 of about 4½ months to assist Mr. Smith.

28  
29 Mr. Gadek reviewed challenges faced by South County veterans. He  
30 explained that the post 9/11 veteran is now the typical veteran in need,  
31 and often they have a husband or wife and children. These veterans have  
32 been told more than the Vietnam-era veteran not to seek help for the  
33 things that are going on. As an example, on Monday, Tuesday, and  
34 Wednesday of just this week he received five phone calls from spouses of  
35 Iraq or Afghanistan vets who said they could not live with that veteran  
36 anymore because they would not get help, the anger is not subsiding, and  
37 they couldn't trust that they were safe with the person. Mr. Gadek noted  
38 that those people are hidden right now, but will show up later with  
39 addictions because the only way they can feel better, if they are not  
40 getting the help they need, is to medicate themselves.

41  
42 Advocates for veterans have not found a way to connect the VA with the  
43 active duty Department of Defense medical system so those who have  
44 received prescriptions while in the system find that they are not available  
45 once they get out. All of these issues are being worked on, but they are  
46 still causing a lot of problems. He added that there are more female

1 veterans as heads of household now, and that number is going up. They  
2 are experiencing the same thing now that the males are, but females are  
3 even less likely than the males are to come in for help and remain very  
4 well hidden when homeless. Additionally, there is a shortage of lower  
5 wage rental units.

6  
7 There is a prevalence of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and TBI  
8 (Traumatic Brain Injury) among returning Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans.  
9 There are approximately 700,000 of the almost 2 million that have  
10 deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan in the last 15 years who have been  
11 identified as having symptoms of or meeting the protocols for PTSD  
12 and/or TBI.

13  
14 Underemployment is the biggest concern he sees for veterans. Minimum  
15 wage jobs are not going to take care of these people for the rest of their  
16 lives when the wage needed to support a family of four is approximately  
17 \$30 an hour.

18  
19 Commissioner Coffey asked about something she had heard about that  
20 would be able to translate military service into something that could be  
21 understood by employers. Mr. Gadek replied that there are a lot of those  
22 tools out there. The bigger problem is that there is a wide range of abilities  
23 and strengths in the military, yet vets are given a one-size-fits-all approach  
24 when they leave the military. Better exit strategies are needed for  
25 veterans. He summarized that he will continue to work with veterans  
26 through Verdant in Lynnwood as there is definitely a huge need for  
27 veterans' assistance.

28  
29 Commissioner Schmidt noted that the services are robust one day a  
30 month. He asked where the referrals are coming from. Mr. Gadek  
31 explained this is his fourth venture into Lynnwood in the last 5½ years; the  
32 first three didn't work out. Right now the referrals are coming from North  
33 Sound 211 because they are at Verdant. They are also coming in because  
34 of Verdant's advertising. Commissioner Schmidt asked about the impact  
35 they are seeing on family members of some of the invisible wounds of  
36 vets. Mr. Gadek replied it is very distressing for the family members. He  
37 suggested it would be a good idea to put together a support group for  
38 them because this is desperately needed. Additionally, more resources  
39 are needed so vets don't have to wait so long or drive so far which can  
40 discourage them from seeking help. Commissioner Schmidt asked about  
41 suicide numbers with veterans. Mr. Gadek stated that last year there were  
42 seven suicides. There has been one this year. Commissioner Schmidt  
43 commented that on average there are 20 veteran suicides a day  
44 nationwide. Mr. Gadek concurred.

1 Chair Hurst asked Mr. Gadek if he helps veterans with filling out papers  
2 and registering for different services. Mr. Gadek explained he helps with  
3 paperwork for medical coverage, disability compensation, in-home care,  
4 etc. because it is a very complicated system.  
5

6 Councilmember Sutton asked Mr. Gadek if he was aware of the new  
7 Veterans Center at the Heritage Park. Mr. Gadek replied he has heard a  
8 little about it and is waiting to hear back. He noted that some of the things  
9 that Lynnwood wants to do are already being done in King County so he  
10 thinks they should get with King County on those things. He said he made  
11 several recommendations to the City when he spoke with them about how  
12 they should proceed with the Veterans Center.  
13

14 Senior Planner Emery asked if there is a Veterans Court. Mr. Gadek  
15 stated they have had task force meetings for almost a year to see if they  
16 can come up with the seed money as well as sustainability money. The  
17 first one did not make it through because of the type of offenses they are  
18 seeing, but the second one is still alive and well and being coordinated.  
19

20 Chair Hurst commented that she was very touched by the presentation on  
21 veterans. She noted that both of her dads were vets, and she wishes there  
22 had been someone like Mr. Gadek who could have helped them. She  
23 thanked him for being there for the veterans.  
24

## 25 **Old Business**

26

27 Senior Planner Emery stated that staff is working on the rental housing  
28 inspection ordinance. Also, staff has posted a list of human services providers on  
29 the city website.  
30

## 31 **New Business**

32

## 33 **Council Liaison Report**

34

35 Councilmember Sutton shared that the budget has been presented to the City  
36 Council. Beginning Monday, the Council will start their discovery process.  
37

38 She also shared that the League of Women Voters is going to be having a  
39 documentary showing of The Long Night which was filmed in Seattle and has to  
40 do with children and sex trafficking. They will be showing the film and having a  
41 panel discussion around it on Thursday, November 17 from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at  
42 Edmonds Unitarian Universal Church in Edmonds.  
43

44 Commissioner Coffey noted that she went to an event they had at the Unitarian  
45 Church earlier this month around the sexual trade and advocacy. She has



1 offered to help them choose people and charities to come and speak with them  
2 that are Snohomish County based instead of only ones from King County.

3  
4 Commissioner Reitan stated there is also a group at Trinity Lutheran Church that  
5 brings awareness around sex trafficking.

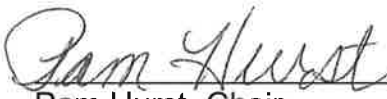
6  
7 **Director's Report**

8  
9 None

10  
11 **Adjournment**

12  
13 *Motion made by Commissioner Dillon, seconded by Chair Hurst, to adjourn the*  
14 *meeting. Motion passed unanimously.*

15  
16 The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

17  
18  
19  12/1/16  
20

21 Pam Hurst, Chair

